

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 SY-05 /069 W

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FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 121

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAIGON PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NY PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 5908

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, CB

SUBJECT: APRIL 2, THE 92ND DAY OF THE OFFENSIVE

REF PHNOM PENH 5860

1. SUMMARY. NEAK LUONG AND BANAM FELL APRIL 1, GIVING THE KC TOTAL CONTROL OF THE LOWER MEKONG. SEVERAL THOUSAND FANK SOLDIERS ARE PROBABLY LOST, WHILE THE LARGE NUMBER OF KC FORCES COMMITTED IN THE AREA ARE NOW FREED FOR POSSIBLE USE AGAINST THE SOUTHERN DEFENSE PERIMETER OF PHNOM PENH. THE FALL OF NEAK LUONG AND BANAM, ALTHOUGH NOT A SURPRISE, IS A STAGGERING SETBACK. POCHENTONG TOOK A FEW 105MM HOWITZER ROUNDS AS WELL AS THE USUAL QUOTA OF ROCKETS, BUT THE AIRLIFT PROCEEDED AT HIGH LEVELS. NORTHWEST OF POCHENTONG, A FANK UNIT ENGAGED IN BLOCKING THE ENEMY PENETRATION KILLING 35 KC SOLDIERS. THERE WERE MORE FRIENDLY PULLBACKS IN THE SOUTHEAST, AND FANK DEFENSES NORTHEAST OF THE CAPITAL ARE DISORGANIZED. A NAVAL INFANTRY POSITION ON THE EAST BANK OF THE MEKONG WAS OVERRUN. END SUMMARY.

2. THE LOWER MEKONG TOWNS OF NEAK LUONG AND BANAAM, FANK'S
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LAST POSITIONS THERE, FELL APRIL 1. KHMER NAVY CRAFT

EVACUATED OVER A HUNDRED ARMY AND NAVY PERSONNEL, BUT THE REST OF THE MORE THAN 4,000 TROOPS ARE PROBABLY LOST, INCLUDING AT LAST WORD, BRIGADIER GENERAL LIM SISAATH, THE MILITARY COMMANDER. THE FALL OF NEAK LUONG/BANAM IN ITSELF IS A MAJOR SETBACK; FURTHERMORE, THE KC VICTORY HERE WILL PROBABLY FREE 5-6,000 OF THEIR FORCES FOR POSSIBLE PRESSURE AGAINST THE SOUTHERN DEFENSE PERIMETER OF PHNOM PENH TO INCLUDE ROCKET AND ARTILLERY ATTACKS.

3. AT POCHENTONG, FOUR 105MM HOWITZER ROUNDS AND TWENTY 107MM ROCKETS WERE REPORTED ON OR NEAR THE AIRFIELD, ONE OF WHICH LANDED IN A NEARBY MILITARY CAMP, KILLING ONE PERSON AND WOUNDING 14. THE AIRLIFT AGAIN WENT WELL, WITH 17 DC-8 AND 18 C-130 SORTIES BY MID-AFTERNOON APRIL 2. IN THE CITY, ONE ROCKET FELL JUST NORTH OF THE INDEPENDENCE MONUMENT, FOUR OTHERS ON ROUTE 5 ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CAPITAL AND SIX NEAR THE KHMER NAVAL BASE.

4. SOUTHEAST OF THE CAPITAL, ELEMENTS OF A BRIGADE FELL BACK IN ORDERLY FASHION, BECAUSE OF THE THREAT TO THEIR FLANKS FOLLOWING THE LOSS OF THE BASSAC RIVER ISLAND REPORTED REFTEL. NORTHEAST OF THE CITY ON THE CHRUOY CHANG WAR PENINSULA FANK DEFENSES ARE REPORTED TO BE SOMEWHAT WEAKER BECAUSE OF THE MOVEMENT OF A BRIGADE FROM THIS AREA TO COUNTER THE KC THREAT IN THE NORTHWEST. TWO BATTALIONS WERE BROUGHT IN AS REPLACEMENTS BUT A COHERENT DEFENSE INCORPORATING THEM WITH OTHER UNITS IS STILL WEAK. A KHMER NAVAL INFANTRY POSITION ON THE EAST BANK OF THE MEKONG WAS OVERRUN WITH 70 TROOPS FISHED OUT OF THE WATER, 30 LISTED AS MISSING. ANOTHER SMALLER KHMER NAVY POSITION ON THE TONLE SAP NORTH OF THE CAPITAL WAS EVACUATED.

5. THE OPERATION TO BLOCK THE KC PENETRATION 7 KILOMETERS NORTHWEST OF POCHENTONG WAS REPORTED TO HAVE MADE SOME PROGRESS AND ON APRIL 1, 35 COMMUNIST SOLDIERS WERE KILLED BY FANK TROOPS IN THIS AREA.
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